IN THE CLAIMS:

1. to 6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously Presented) The fault detecting method for a semiconductor integrated circuit according to claim 8, additionally comprising obtaining mask information from a layout device for laying out a semiconductor integrated circuit to which the fault list corresponds, wherein said order of possible faults is based on the mask information.

8. (Previously Presented) A fault detecting method for a semiconductor integrated circuit comprising:

providing a fault list comprising (a) information identifying physical sites on a physical layout of a semiconductor integrated circuit where a possible fault is likely to occur, and (b) information required to reduce faults;

detecting faults in accordance with said fault list in a semiconductor integrated circuit to which said fault list corresponds;

calculating a density of a mask pattern corresponding to mask information obtained from a layout device for laying out

the semiconductor integrated circuit to which said fault list corresponds;

calculating a likelihood of occurrence for each possible fault depending on the density of the mask pattern;

weighting the arranged possible faults according to said calculated likelihoods of occurrence;

arranging the possible faults in the fault list in order according to their likelihood of occurrence to create an ordered fault list; and

detecting faults in said semiconductor integrated circuit by using the ordered fault list,

wherein the fault list comprises data about a likelihood of a fault occurring at a physical site.

9. (Previously Presented) The fault detecting method for a semiconductor integrated circuit according to claim 8, additionally comprising:

considering reliability data based on records of past use of cells or functional blocks of a semiconductor integrated circuit to which the fault list corresponds; and

determining said likelihoods of occurrence of defects based on said reliability data.

10. to 12. (Canceled)

13. (Previously Presented) The fault detecting method for a semiconductor integrated circuit according to claim 19, additionally comprising:

omitting from the fault list possible faults having a specified low probability of occurrence to define a remaining part of the fault list, wherein

said again detecting faults comprises detecting faults according to the remaining part of the fault list.

14. to 18. (Canceled)

19. (Previously Presented) A fault detecting method for a semiconductor integrated circuit comprising:

first detecting faults in a semiconductor integrated circuit to create a detection result;

combining said detection result with (a) information about physical sites on a physical layout of the semiconductor integrated circuit to which said fault list corresponds where a

possible fault is likely to occur and (b) information required to reduce faults, to create a fault list;

again detecting faults according to said fault list in such semiconductor integrated circuit;

calculating a density of a mask pattern corresponding to mask information obtained from a layout device for laying out the semiconductor integrated circuit to which said fault list corresponds;

calculating a likelihood of occurrence for each possible fault depending on the density of the mask pattern;

weighting the arranged possible faults according to said calculated likelihoods of occurrence;

arranging the possible faults in order according to their likelihood of occurrence to create an ordered fault list; and

second detecting possible faults in a semiconductor integrated circuit using the ordered fault list,

wherein the fault list comprises data about a likelihood of a possible fault occurring at a physical site.

20.   (Previously Presented) The fault detecting method for a semiconductor integrated circuit according to claim 19, further comprising:

   providing a database and storing therein reliability data

based on records of past use of cells or functional blocks of a

semiconductor integrated circuit to which the fault list

corresponds; wherein

   said likelihoods of occurrence are according to said

reliability data in the database.

   21. to 59.   (Canceled)